



THE PHYSICIAN'S *Bookshelf*

THE PATHOGENESIS OF POLIOMYELITIS—Harold K. Faber, M.D., Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics, Stanford University School of Medicine. Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, 1955. 157 pages, \$5.00.

This book summarizes many years of painstaking study of the pathogenesis of poliomyelitis and is recommended to every serious student of this disease; its appeal will be greatest to those with good understanding of the problems of poliomyelitis. The thesis that pathways of ingress and egress of the virus lie within nerve cells and not primarily in other tissues is succinctly and convincingly supported. The concept elsewhere proposed that virus multiplication and dissemination occurs in many tissues other than the nerve cells and that central nervous system involvement is a phenomenon secondary to systemic infection is subjected to searching and most persuasive contradiction based on experimental pathological studies and clinical observation which is most difficult to refute. Much of the newer knowledge of the distribution and nature of the infectious agent is effectively reconciled with the ideas of the natural history of the virus which the author has advanced for many years.

This volume does not make for easy reading but moves forward logically and without repetitiousness to its conclusions. Your reviewer read it through carefully twice with profit.

The bibliography alone would make this work worth while because it carefully documents so many matters of great importance in this disease.

* * *

J.A.M.A. CLINICAL ABSTRACTS OF DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT—Noah Fabricant, M.D., Editor. Published with the approval of the Board of Trustees, American Medical Association, 1955. Intercontinental Medical Book Corporation, with Grune and Stratton, Inc., New York, 1955. 627 pages, \$5.50.

For more than a half century the medical literature abstract section of the Journal of the American Medical Association has been one of its most popular and useful features. It provides knowledge in capsule form for the specialist as well as the general practitioner. It emphasizes in its selection two aspects of practice—diagnosis and treatment.

The Journal has now decided to issue selected abstracts in an annual series of which this volume is the first. The selection is good as are the abstracts proper.

On the other hand, the reviewer, impressed though he is with the excellence of the Journal's abstract department, can see little reason for compiling these abstracts into yet another annual volume. They are already available in the bound volumes of the Journal. In this new volume they are competing with the much more complete *Excerpta Medica* and the various annual reviews which make an attempt at integrating the more useful contributions into a coherent whole.

Despite this the Journal's prestige is probably sufficient to cause many physicians to purchase these abstracts.

DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS—The Interpretation of Clinical Evidence—A. McGehee Harvey, M.D., Professor of Medicine and Head of the Department of Internal Medicine, the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and James Bordley III, M.D., Director, Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital, Cooperstown, N. Y., Clinical Professor of Medicine, Columbia University, New York, and Clinical Professor of Medicine, Albany Medical College. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1955. 665 pages, \$11.00.

This book attempts to provide a method of approach to the diagnosis of disease by expansion of the art and science of differential diagnosis. This has been done through the medium of the Clinical Pathological Conference. These conferences, largely of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, present differential diagnosis as a systematized discipline. Each conference is oriented around a principal condition. They are written up chapter by chapter and a good many illustrative cases are given.

The volume is a good exercise book for students and prospective conductors of clinical pathological conferences. There are many "pearls" given in the course of the book, as well as many tables of differential diagnosis, which are excellent and useful. After the known cases are presented there is a series of unknown cases on which the reader may try his skill. Following this is a table of laboratory values, which should be titled "normal." Additional valuation of tests such as the serology would be helpful.

There are serious limitations to the method which the authors have adopted. It exaggerates the difficulties of diagnosis; it prevents consideration of the diagnosis of disease which does not run a fatal course or in which accurate diagnosis results in life-saving therapeutic measures. Even more limiting, the graduate physician, in order to get most out of the book, must follow the authors' established patterns of thinking and writing, exactly, never peeking from the printed page. As for the conferences themselves, they are well chosen and well done. However, try as the authors may, they fail to capture the character and personality of the conductor of the conference (in these largely the late Dr. Louis Hamman) and of the pathologist, the two ingredients which make clinical pathological conferences most interesting and enjoyable.

* * *

MINOR SURGERY—John E. Sutton, M.D., F.A.C.S., Assistant Clinical Professor of Surgery, Cornell University, Medical College. Landsberger Medical Books, Inc. Distributed solely by The Blakiston Division of the McGraw-Hill Book Co., 330 West 42nd Street, New York 36, N. Y., 1955. 334 pages, \$7.00.

As the name implies, this book is a handbook of minor surgery for the General Practitioner. The thirteen chapters cover briefly the minor encounters in a general practice. Although the discussions are short and "to the point," one cannot help but feel that many subjects discussed should be common knowledge to anyone fortunate enough to have received their M.D. degree. The illustrations are fair but there are other books on minor surgery which are more adequate.